

Testimony in SUPPORT for House Bill 5029 and House Bill 5507
RELATING TO LABOR AND LABOR RELATIONS -- MINIMUM WAGES
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Planned Parenthood of Southern New England
House Committee on Labor
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Chair Corvese and honorable members of the House Committee on Labor, thank you for the opportunity to testify on behalf of Planned Parenthood of Southern New England (PPSNE) with strong **support for House Bill 5029 (Rep. Bennett) and House Bill 5507 (Rep. Felix)**. Planned Parenthood of Southern New England (PPSNE) provided sexual and reproductive health care to nearly 8,000 patients in Rhode Island last year. Planned Parenthood believes all people should have access to quality, affordable, and compassionate health care as a basic human right — regardless of who you are, where you live, your income, if you have health insurance or your immigration status.

Planned Parenthood believes that every individual has the right to determine their own reproductive destiny and understands that right is directly linked to the conditions in their communities. That includes the right to plan their families, live in safe and healthy communities, and to have full control of their body, life, and future. As advocates for reproductive freedom, we must consider all aspects of a person's life including those that affect their economic stability. Every person deserves economic security to care for themselves and their family with dignity. We know firsthand, through the patients we see in our health centers, the juggling act people must play each month to pay their bills, care for their families, and meet their basic needs.

Raising the minimum wage is critical to raising wages for women, particularly Black women and Latinas, given that they are overrepresented in low-wage occupations.ⁱ A fair minimum wage ensures that working people can support themselves and their families, no matter who they are or what job they hold which is why we strongly support H5029. Research indicates that the subminimum wage for tipped workers perpetuates racial and gender inequities, and results in worse economic outcomes for tipped workers. Forcing tipped workers to rely on tips for their wages creates tremendous instability in income flows, making it more difficult to budget or absorb financial shocks.ⁱⁱ Women, who represent over two-thirds of tipped workers nationally, are hit especially hard by this poverty-level wage, which leaves them vulnerable to both economic insecurity and sexual harassment.ⁱⁱⁱ Eliminating the subminimum wage will help advance racial and gender equity and why H 5507 is so important for Rhode Island workers.

Planned Parenthood will continue to fight for policies that protect the rights of all people to ensure our patients, and our communities have what they need to live healthy and self-determined lives. We must do more to protect all workers from harmful practices that impact their ability to provide for themselves and their families. Increasing the minimum wage and ending the subminimum wage for tipped workers will provide a level playing field to support restaurants and ensure workers earn a fair wage. This is an urgent racial, reproductive, and gender justice issue. That is why we urge you to support H 5029 and H 5507 to protect the basic rights of workers in our state. These bills will help guarantee and promote the health and economic security of all Rhode Island residents and help families thrive instead of struggling to survive. Thank you for your time and consideration.



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ⁱ <https://www.americanprogress.org/article/playbook-for-the-advancement-of-women-in-the-economy/closing-the-gender-pay-gap/>

ⁱⁱ Seven facts about tipped workers and the tipped minimum wage <https://www.epi.org/blog/seven-facts-about-tipped-workers-and-the-tipped-minimum-wage/>

ⁱⁱⁱ One Fair Wage: Women Fare Better in States with Equal Treatment for Tipped Workers <https://nwlc.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/OFW-2021v2.pdf#:~:text=One%20Fair%20Wage%20states%20require%20employers%20to%20pay,gap%20in%20states%20that%20follow%20the%20federal%20standard.>